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NEWS RELEASE

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Services for LA Court of Appeal Justice Morio Fukuto on Saturday, November 24

Los Angeles—Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, November 24, for former Court of Appeal Justice Morio L. Fukuto, of the Second Appellate District, Division Two.

A California judge for more than three decades, Justice Fukuto died on November 15 due to complications of Parkinson's disease. He was 77. The services will be held at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 961 South Mariposa Avenue, Los Angeles 90006.

"My six years serving with Justice Fukuto on the Court of Appeal were wonderful," said Administrative Presiding Justice Roger Boren, of the Second Appellate District. "Morio was the epitome of a gentleman of few words. When he spoke, you always listened because he was a plain spoken and direct man, with great judgment and common sense."

Justice Boren continued: "He was my most trusted consultant. He sought to bring the justices together on difficult cases, and was often the one to find the right solution to a legal or administrative problem. And most importantly he was a very kind and sensitive person. I will miss him very much."

Presiding Justice Norman Epstein, of the Court of Appeal's Division Four, stated, "I was saddened to learn of the passing of Justice Fukuto, as were all who knew him. He was a highly respected member of the appellate court, dedicated to getting it right. His graciousness was evident years before, when he was elevated from the municipal court to the Los Angeles Superior Court. It seems the Governor's office had announced the appointment of one more judge than the number of vacancies. Judge Fukuto, as I recall, was senior in point of service or the time of the Governor's announcement, so logically, he would have received the appointment and the other candidate would have to await the next vacancy. Judge Fukuto insisted on stepping aside for that candidate for

(over)

the prospect that he would be elevated when another vacancy occurred (as it did, and as he was). Not everyone would have done that, but it is typical of the man that he did.”

Acting Presiding Justice Robert Mallano, of Division One, made the following statement: “I appeared before Morio Fukuto in 1974 when he was appointed to the South Bay Municipal Court (Torrance) and he immediately struck me as a conscientious judge always seeking to do the right thing. In 1978 I was appointed to that court and had the pleasure of sitting with him there and eventually on the Superior Court as well. Working with him daily, I came to have the greatest regard for Judge Fukuto, both as to his hard work, intelligence and fairness on the bench, but also as a person of the highest moral standards and for his kindness and empathy for others. Both on the trial court and the Court of Appeal, he always had the strength and courage to do the right thing. After his retirement and while battling Parkinson's disease, Administrative Presiding Justice Roger Boren, Justice Kathryn Todd and I would have lunch with Justice Fukuto and his wife in Torrance from time to time. Although in a wheelchair and being unable to speak, he continued to demonstrate the courage and strength of will that made him one of the most outstanding judges of his time.”

Justice Fukuto served on the Court of Appeal from 1986 to 1999. Prior to his elevation to the appeal court, he was a judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County from 1979 to 1986 and of the then Los Angeles Municipal Court from 1974 to 1979.

Before becoming a judge, Justice Fukuto served for 17 years as a deputy district attorney for Los Angeles County, rising to become the head of Central Operations for that office.

Justice Fukuto is survived by his wife, Grace, and two daughters.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that donations be made in Justice Fukuto’s memory to any of the following:

St. Mary’s Episcopal Church
961 South Mariposa Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90006
(213) 387-1334

National Parkinson’s Foundation
(800) 327-4545

South Bay Keiro Home
15115 South Vermont Avenue
Gardena, CA 90247
(310) 532-0700